

Francis Bacon
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Company Secretary
Oxfam GB
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John Smith Drive
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Tuesday, 03 August 2010

Dear Company Secretary

I am writing to make a complaint under Oxfam's Open Information Policy as published on Oxfam's website.

On 02 July 2010 I emailed Oxfam enquiries asking for the following information:

"I am trying to find a detailed breakdown of Oxfam's expenditure in 2009-10.

For each overseas project funded in this period I would like to know:

1. The name of the project

2. The location of the project

3. The total expenditure on the project in 2009-10

Please let me know where I can get hold of this information or email it to me if it is available."

After an exchange of messages the Supporter Relations assistant gave me this reply:

"I am afraid it would be very difficult to gather this detailed information for each project. This is because we work in over 70 countries, and the regions in which we work manage their own budgets. As I am sure you can imagine due to limited time and resources it would be quite hard to gather all this information from the regions for you. I hope our Annual Report & Accounts can offer you sufficient information for the research you are doing."

I believe that this is inconsistent with Oxfam's Open Information Policy which states that "Oxfam GB is committed to being transparent in its work and accountable to its key stakeholders". In my view if it is not possible to obtain a basic list of projects that have been funded, then this cannot be an effective policy. I would be very surprised if there was no central list of projects worldwide.

I also believe that the response I received is inconsistent with several other commitments that Oxfam has made. For instance the INGO Accountability Charter (of which Oxfam is signatory) states that "by signing this Charter we seek to promote further the values of transparency and accountability that we stand for, and commit our INGO to respecting its provisions."

In the past Oxfam has publicly campaigned for greater transparency regarding government aid spending. But the levels of transparency reached by the UK's Department for International Development, for instance, now far exceed those of international NGOs to the extent that I think it is

disingenuous for Oxfam's Open Information Policy to be presented as an adapted version of Freedom of Information legislation.

I would like you to review whether my request was handled in accordance with the Open Information Policy and whether the policy itself is adequate. I hope you will agree that basic information about Oxfam's spending should be published.

Yours sincerely

Francis Bacon